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A JEWEL IN THE SAND

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By
ALMA NEWTON

Author of
"THE LOVE LETTERS OF A MYSTIC"
"MEMORIES" "GIRL BLUE STRING"



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
HOME	3
SHARON	36
THE WALK	48
THE COUNTRY	62
SATURN REIGNS	79
THE WHITE GATE	95
REALIZATION	101
TILL MAGNIFICENT MISTAKE	111
THE EVER LASTING ARMS	116

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HOME

SHE stood before the mirror gazing at her own reflection with confidence as though appreciating the artistic effect of the picture she made, yet looking deep into her soul, seriously and with clear vision. She was beautiful in a very strange way, for, in the physical sense, she was only fairly good looking. It was a certain symmetrical development, embracing mind, soul and body, that pleased. Her eyes were large and blue, her hair was quite golden, her lines those of the thoroughbred animal. Her smile was unique, it was that of the Mona Liza; mysterious and fascinating. She looked at herself in a perplexed way as though saying: What am I? Who am I? and, what shall I do?

Slowly she turned toward me. She was a gorgeous creature in gold and fine lace. These were characteristic of her, for she had often said: "Only the beautiful can touch me; ugly things, ugly people I must see but they cannot touch me."

At closer range I saw that the gown was an old one, but the kind that never goes out of style. It was a relic of the fine days when she had funds enough to indulge her artistic taste. I looked about the room. Guessing my thought, she said:

"Don't you like this room? You cannot understand my liking it? I once hated it too, because it had nothing beautiful in it. So, my friend, I determined to *make* it beautiful. Can you understand that? You see there are beautiful colors and flowers in this room, my thoughts have made it so, they are subjective creations." She paused, then continued as though thinking aloud. "I have come here to get some things and say good-bye to this little place forever."

To me the room was entirely simple and uninteresting. It was small, barren, cheerless. The only thing that gave it atmosphere

was the candle light. There was a small fireplace in which a few logs smoldered. Yet there was a presence in the room somehow, something hard to define, for the room itself was bleak indeed with its white walls, lack of color, dingy furniture and old curtains, and the windows were sadly neglected, seeming to shut out the day.

Slowly she turned, looking at me, and said calmly:

“Sit down, my friend, and let us talk together. You must listen to me. I want to tell you of my life.”

“I want to know, Cynthia,” I said. “You must tell me everything.”

“Yes, I will tell you everything,” she answered, solemnly, as she took my hand and looked at me with her great blue eyes. “*Everything*,” she repeated again.

“But tell me, my dear,” I said, “why did you send for me so suddenly after so many years? What is it? What problem confronts you?”

“I want to say good-bye,” she answered. “Tomorrow I am going to *Egypt*. We may never meet again. . . .”

The rain beat upon the window; the fire burned low, the noise of the city had ceased and we were quite alone.

"Tell me," I said again, *and this is what she told me.*

Of course you know that I was born in New England. My home was in the country, quite away from any center of modern civilization. It rained and rained, and I was compelled to be in the house very often with my sisters, whom I disliked. They were all strangers to me, somehow; they were narrow, dull and disagreeable. There was no sweetness, no color in that home of ours and the dreary lake that wound around the garden seemed to reflect the mood of the place, for it was grey and heavily shadowed. A lonely-looking windmill was the only ornament, if it could be called that, near the house, and the garden itself seemed to hate the perfume of the flowers, which appeared to grow resentfully, as if they hated the soil that nourished them.

The murmur of the sea could be heard in the distance and there was, too, the echo of the fog-horns. These fog-horns moaned in

the night while the red flash from the light-house was the one cheerful thing to be seen. When I walked I invariably found myself in the sand. There was sand everywhere and as I went toward the red flash of the light-house, always before I reached the shore I was held tightly, irresistibly in the sand, *quick-sand it was!* Sometimes it came to my knees and held me fast and I was forced to call out for my sisters, who always pulled me to safety, reluctantly, rudely, scolding me for my recklessness. It was the light I wanted, the color of it called me; I would tell them frankly I could not help going toward it!

“But didn’t you know you could never get there?” they would say to me.

“Oh, I do not want to go there,” I would answer. “I merely want to come to the edge of the water so that I can see it more clearly, and, too, I like the danger—it is an adventure,” I would add hopelessly, while they merely stared and shrugged their shoulders disdainfully. Perhaps it was not their fault, for they had no souls, no color element in their natures, no sweetness, no imagination, no charm. They were completely lacking in

comprehension. How could such people be, I thought as I looked at them; mere people without souls!

And then my social and ethical views annoyed them. One day I said:

"I want to go to Boston, because there are Unitarians in Boston and I will not have to think in an orthodox way; I can be natural there."

And for this I was severely punished, not in a physical way, but tortured by endless and stupid criticism.

One evening after they had pulled me out of the sand, I went home with them and after a little while it began to rain. "I am afraid the roses will fall to-day," I said, "and then there will not be any color around this place."

My oldest sister resented this. "What difference does that make?" she said, "There are flowers in the village," forgetting that the village was three miles away. Then I said something else and they did not think me polite. I told them that I believed in reincarnation; they thought this very queer. When I said that I liked to hear the rain fall

they thought it was weird, and then I had to explain that I liked to hear the rain fall, that it cheered me because it brought me something, I felt there was rhythm in it. Then they told me that I made incoherent and involved statements. All of these perfectly simple little things created intense arguments which ended by my saying that I liked to hear people curse because at least there was reality in cursing, there was sincerity and force. Then they thought me unrefined. I just got up quietly and left the room, with the determination that I was going to quit the place as soon as the rain stopped. I simply could not stand it any longer!

I had saved a little money, my grandmother had given me a few thousands. I happened to be of age, so I determined to start out alone, to go away at any cost. I waited until they were asleep. I had quietly packed a few things, and I crept down the dismal stairway, opened the door and slipped out into the darkness. It was light to me, however, for it helped me in my flight, and as I looked back to see the weird old homestead, the windmill seemed to suddenly rush toward

me, to pull me back; the dogs barked savagely, the wind blew ruthlessly through the trees. I ran breathlessly down the long sandy road. This, too, was narrow, but I had never noticed it before, the strange, straight way it went, with never a curve; it was just one long straight line, having somehow the personality of a spinster.

On and on I walked in the darkness, sometimes I ran and then I walked again. The birds fluttered, wakened from their lonely sleep; a screech owl shrieked its grewsome message of death to me as I passed and yet I was not afraid. I was too glad, too happy, for each step took me farther away from that strange, cold world, those narrow people and the sand that had held me there! Now I was to be free—free—— That was all I could think of. I was actually alone. How wonderful it was to be alone! Once I stumbled and fell, dropping my bundles, but I picked them up hastily and ran into the brightness of the dawn.

I never saw the day break so prettily. There was nothing solemn or magnificent about it. It was merely pretty; full of bright

colors and warmth. Some people came toward me, some walking, others driving down the road, staring curiously, while others came from the back of me, but none offered me a ride. Finally I came to a farmhouse. A thin old man with a large straw hat offered me some warm milk from his pail. I drank it and walked on.

“Won’t you stop and have breakfast?” he called to me indifferently.

“No, no, not here,” I said. “It’s lonesome; it’s like the place I left. I’m going to take a train at the next station. I am going to New York!”

“New York.” he said. “Bad city. Better not go.”

It is alive, I thought, at least, as I waved farewell and continued my walk down the road.

I reached the station.

The train trip was desolate and miserable. The heavy rain poured steadily down, seeming to beat in upon the windows in a malicious way, suggestive of a vindictive element in nature where the evil was as potent as the good. Now and then the train would stop

suddenly and the desolation would become more unbearable as I gazed out upon the dreary station building filled with ragged boys and dissipated men hanging about to enjoy their one diversion of seeing the train come in. Then, too, the train was not properly heated, which added to the bleakness of the journey. The food was uninviting; the faces in the car were disagreeable and sordid. An irritable conductor paraded up and down the aisle with an expression of unconcern until he would reach the side of a passenger, where he fairly growled when the desired ticket did not come forth as quickly as he believed it should. Behind him was a sulky porter, whose only fear in life seemed to be the fear of not getting a goodly fee; and behind him again was one of those impossible trainmen, who persisted in shouting, "Milk chocolate," in my ear in a manner that seemed to puncture the drum of that very necessary organ. Two fat women immediately in front of me persistently swallowed huge slices of chocolate cake, for chocolate was the thing of the hour, creating an environment of a sordid kind that made the very act of living seem a

certain curse, far removed from anything that bordered on the joy of living.

This part of the trip was, by necessity, spent in a day coach, and I felt happy when I changed for an express, expecting a more agreeable atmosphere, but as luck would have it, I stumbled into an older woman to whom, through courtesy, I offered my lower berth, taking her upper, that in no way offered comfort. After a few hours of labored sleep, the train stopped abruptly. There was a hideous stillness, a few men walking by the windows with dull lanterns swinging to and fro for at least an hour. Then we learned that there had been an accident which would delay us for an indefinite time.

The passengers began to mumble and sigh, which resulted in a sort of chorus of discontent. All kinds and manner of faces, women in particular, peered out between the green curtains in a state of complete naturalness, terrible to behold. Large faces encircled with curl papers, thin faces going through the necessary process of absorbing cold cream; men with their hair standing up like the bristles of a cheap brush, their expression

dejected and bored, yet leaning forward to ask a question of the conductor, who persisted in falling over the shoes of the travellers and giving vent to his temper upon the innocent darky who continued to follow mechanically behind, who, by the way, was the very blackest Ethiopian my eyes had ever beheld.

After hours of waiting the train gradually began to creep along the rails as though expecting to stop again every minute. This of course kept everyone awake and produced more questions and sighs. Finally we began to make better time and reached our destination, presenting a most dejected and unenviable appearance in the New York station.

I went to a hotel where, in spite of my fatigue, I managed to eat a healthy meal, securing the stimulation for the day's search for a suitable apartment. Finally I found one.

Now I could begin my voice lessons and the putting into form of a light opera I had composed. After a few weeks a publisher sent for me. I went to his office and he promised to take the opera if I would consent to

his omitting some lines. To this I consented. He was a man of the minute—not of the hour. He had a most promising looking contract drawn up, ready to be signed, lying upon the table in front of him, in reach of a large purple pencil and very long knife. While I was dimly glancing at royalty promises I suddenly realized that this man had appointed himself critic as well as business manager. Without delay or the annoyance of consulting other people, he immediately began to draw purple lines through my beloved pages with a huge purple pencil. After doing this for a time, a sudden and more efficient idea of elimination appealed to him. He quite mercilessly took the long knife and ripped out the pages and “shoved” them toward me. I was sure he meant to “shove” them at me—toward me was quite too polite. Before I could protest or indulge in any conversation whatever, I found myself being bowed or shown out of the door and my very bewildered self in the bleak hall of a dingy old building where elevators glided up and down as if nothing had happened, while so much had happened. I was on the road to success or

failure—to speedily become a target for admiration or ridicule.

After a few months the opera was “put on.” I believe that is the way they express it in the musical world. It did not make a pretty débüt; it just “came out”!

I forgot to say that I wore a picture hat and my smartest frock the day I saw the publisher, with the hope that I would at least dimly impress him with a youthful appearance and a pleasing personality. I also forgot to say that neither one was noticed—I have a way of forgetting things sometimes.

But, to continue, the opera opened, and what a reception it had. I found myself wanting to escape, to go anywhere, to go everywhere; only to get away—for my very watchful blue eyes lit upon these terrible words in one of the leading newspapers:

“A badly constructed and silly comic opera, entitled ‘The New World,’ should be stopped. It is the kind of thing that is entirely worthless from a musical point of view and insidious in a moral sense.”

If that was a beginning, what must be the end? I vaguely remember an unpleasant sen-

sation of two very huge tears rolling (they refused to course) down my cheeks. I brushed them aside with scorn. I hated tears and I never could cry prettily. It seemed a subtle art, this art of crying prettily, and I wondered how so many of our successful actresses could do it so attractively. I thought of them, of many lovely personalities and how they, too, perhaps, had struggled in their art and tried to find some comfort in tears but could not. Those words in the newspaper had frozen me, I was petrified with fear, to say nothing of grief and mortification.

Added to this, my few friends maintained a deadly silence; none of them dared to disagree with that newspaper. Some offered advice, a change of air or a change of profession. Others tried to soothe the heart and quiet the brain by suggesting that I do nothing at all!. This was the last straw. They preferred a complete silence for my future existence, anything rather than to have me "do something" again.

Weeks dragged by, there was nothing heard of the work. Finally one paper came out with glowing words of praise, and then

I was frightened more than ever, because I did not know whether it was sarcasm or written sincerely. But in spite of this a change of heart came, for other papers and my friends then "thought so too." I was not to be silent, I was to compose as much as I pleased and forever, and this I immediately proceeded to do.

While paper was being used as though it could never be scarce and pens were flying around the desk like ping-pong balls and Kellar's slight-of-hand performance—a mere bagatelle compared to my flourishing newly awakened art—I was incessantly interrupted by telephone calls and persistent visitors.

First of all the moving-picture man who saw my face in the newspaper came to interview me; others wanted positions, then a lot of cranks, and finally a strange-looking man who wanted to write an opera with me. This last one announced himself to my secretary (of course I had a secretary by this time) with such importance and dignity that I decided to see him. During the conversation I thought I detected a certain eccentricity

of manner, but finally we decided that we would write an opera together. I forgot to say that he was an unsuccessful but nevertheless talented composer.

When we began the score he told me that I was to supply the ideas and he the technique. To this I agreed, only to discover that ideas meant the entire scheme and color tone, as he called it, and that the technique consisted of merely renumbering the pages which the secretary would prepare as he directed. Also, we were to divide the possible profits, etc. The etc. was to be more than the profits, I feared, and the immediate placing of the opera was promised by him.

A year went by and there was no production. In the meantime I discovered that my "helpmate" was not suffering from a slight neurasthenia caused by overwork and too much temperament, but that he had been an inmate of Bloomingdale for six years, where he had written and directed all the amateur theatrical performances given by the hopelessly insane!

Then there came into my life a man, a

nouveau riche, one who was neither a musician nor a publisher, just a beau he called himself. To his mind this was the fine distinction between the platonic friend and the temperamental lover. Now his idea of being a beau was to spend a large part of his many millions in tips, so that the waiters in smart restaurants would remember him when he walked in; to order vintage wine and be served with the American kind, and to drink it because it was the same color and not know the difference; to order partridge and entrees quite foreign to his taste and to get service by being ostentatious.

Upon one important occasion I had, at his request, invited some fashionable guests to dine. At least they were in the Social Register, which to the parvenu is nothing less than a sure position in that something called Society. He thought he was making a sure advance in society—I should say *upon* society. After the wines were ordered I solemnly said to my friend on the left:

“Mary, his idea of fun is to make toasts, watch him.”

I had scarcely uttered the words when, to

my sudden horror, he raised his glass to make a toast about roses and wine and fair women (that usual tiresome and provincial toast), instead of raising his glass, as is usually done at such parties, he raised the table and proceeded to turn over the adulterated American wine upon my one smart gown. Without changing my expression, as I was too numb for real feeling, I again turned solemnly and silently and said to my friend: "I told you so. . . ."

Whether it was in response to that immutable psychological law of attraction, I do not know. I only know that since then I have been afraid to think about tables and I am frightened when people insist upon toasts.

Now this ostentatious man insisted upon speaking French, not only in smart restaurants, but in places where French was never heard. •

"*Attendez, s'il vous plait.*" "*Encore, s'il vous plait.*" "*L'addition, s'il vous plait.*" And the while a perfectly good Irish waiter would vainly try to interpret his meaning.

Also upon one occasion he spoke to a taxicab driver, as he was leaving the cab. "*Tout*

de suite," he said. The driver immediately saluted him, thinking it was a military command. Upon entering the taxi again he said: "*Vite, vite*." I am sure by certain obvious signalling between the two the poor driver decided that my acquaintance was a brother Elk and in return muttered a password of this very secret fraternity and eagerly listened for more brotherly information. In the meantime my acquaintance growled and grew impatient. I said calmly and serenely to the driver: "He means hurry. Don't be alarmed, he's only speaking French," while the driver jostled us unmercifully down Fifth Avenue.

A few days later I conceived an idea that I would give my acquaintance a pleasant evening, so I invited two French scholars to dine with us. After we were securely seated and settled, I turned to him and said, "Now you need not talk to the waiters, here are two perfectly good French scholars to chat with you."

The Frenchmen, full of anticipation of speaking in their own tongue, began to talk at a furious rate, fairly pelting him with

questions in French, first speaking about the political situation and then asking whether he had read Anatole France and Guy de Maupassant!

I happened to glance up at this time to see that my acquaintance had turned blue with horror, as he had not the faintest idea of what they were saying to him. I modestly explained to the Frenchmen and changed the subject immediately—and the language!

* * * * *

The people I met were mere people, in the sense of being quite common-place. They did not interest me; perhaps that is why I interested them. The attentions of men like my acquaintance were odious to me. When I got to the point where I was forced to live in one room, with my daily sustenance consisting of what the window-sill could take care of (a bottle of milk, etc.), the attention of these men became more pronounced. They seemed to be imbued with a fixed idea that it was merely a question of time when my endeavors would fail and I would be forced to call upon them for help. When I told them that love was the only thing that would cause

me to change my mode of living, that only love made any relationship right, they laughed and thought me unsophisticated and inconsistent, for they had not the refinement to realize that love blesses everything that it touches; that true love in itself is a benediction, a greater one than any priest can bestow.

Why is it that coarse minds make no distinction between passion and love? Is it because they have only known the former?

A long, weary year passed and not only my friends but even my teacher, every man I knew with the exception of one friend, seemed to regard me as a target. Now this friend was Douglas, a true gentleman, a beautiful character, a man quite a little older than myself. He understood and believed that no degree of poverty or loneliness would change me. But the others, how terrible they were! I remember their eyes, their smiles, their look of amused superiority as if saying: "Sooner or later you will tire of the milk bottle, the window-sill, the bleak room—and you will be like the rest of the girls we know. They, too, were like you at first."

Their vulgar minds disgusted me. I knew that these men could not understand me, but it really did not matter after all, for I was learning that in life it is our *motives* that count, that motives are *living forces* and that whatever we are we express subconsciously. And another thing I learned was that people should be extremely careful in using the word friend. They should express themselves differently. So-called friends should be spoken of as acquaintances or mentioned simply as the people we know. The word friendship should be used with care, for it is a rare thing; it is like other words—cathedral, saint, artist—for there are few real ones. We must not expect friendship in society. We must expect it either from great people or from those one meets out of society, those who are too developed *for* it or those who are not developed *to* it. There is a brotherhood of the poor and there is a fraternity among the truly great; they both possess soul, and a soul can give without sacrifice, for giving is a pleasure so great that the thought of sacrifice does not enter into it. The whole motive is so selfless that there is no *self* exalta-

tion! Exaltation exists, of course, but it is of a nature so universal that it is like a great dawn that thrusts aside all of the shadows of the night, bringing the day of things. . . .

Sincerity is always conspicuous, oftentimes misunderstood and oftentimes disliked. Sincerity is not understood by the artificial class and neither is it understood by the parvenus. They do not realize that sincerity is stronger than pride; that sincerity is the high principle in *true* womanhood, that neither poverty, humiliation nor calumny can destroy it; that it is a fortress nothing can overwhelm. It stands supremely strong and magnificently white, but *alone*. It must be content in the blessing of truth, for the reward is the triumph of principle, the joy is the beauty of initiation. . . .

The only beautiful thing in my life was Douglas. One afternoon he came for tea and he said:

“Cynthia, I have asked a friend to join us today. He is a man you would like and he loves music. He is poor and he is married and strangely enough he is in love with his wife! He wants to hear you sing. I told him

about your voice. Will you sing for him, Cynthia?"

"Yes," I said mechanically. "It's easier than talking. I will do it."

In a few moments there was a knock upon the door.

"Come in," I said indifferently.

Looking up casually, I saw the most attractive face I have ever seen; expressive and exquisitely refined. His face was a little weak, just enough to show that he was impressionable, which, although undesirable in character is very desirable in art. A nature that is too strong often cuts itself off from the impressions it should receive through suggestion.

The minute I saw him I knew that words were useless indeed, that he understood through his sensitiveness. Our minds were one.

Yes, I would sing! I would sing for him and I knew that he loved the rhythm as well as the melody; that there was a complete song always in his heart, a song of love.

I served his tea and went to the piano.

"What shall I sing?" I asked eagerly.

“Have you something of Shubert?” he said dreamily.

Of course he would like Shubert, I thought. It is so natural. I sang. He listened, and suddenly I was afraid; the contact between our souls was too intense, they had met in a song and I was afraid! We did not talk. There was really nothing to say, and when he went away somehow I could not look at him, and I don't think that he looked at me.

He came often. It was June. I was alone. I loved him. Is that not enough? He was so boyish, so handsome, so magnetic, so—— Well, I loved him completely. I—— I tried to put him out of my life. I did try but I couldn't—— He would not let me and I loved him so.

How well I remember the day when we first went away together, the sweetness, the strength of it, the worship, the exquisite beauty of it—how I put my hand upon his head, mentally blessing him, calling out the spirituality in his nature and then mingling it with kisses, as an artist who takes a violin and brings out first a great strong tone and

then a lovely one, a sad one, a happy one—mixing them in a beautiful symphony. Then there was a magnetic current that seemed to encircle us, a something tangible. It was the rhythm of Tao, the very music of God, and I thought a great love is never a weakness fundamentally! The effect may seem weak and may prove disastrous, but the cause is a splendid thing, it is something magnificent and divine.

And then there was Christmas together, *my* Christmas as I called it, for it was the first happy Christmas I had ever known. I awoke in the early morning with such thankfulness in my heart that I immediately dressed and went to early communion. It was raining, yet somehow it seemed completely bright to me as I walked radiantly into the church. The music was exquisite, the solemn beauty of the early morning perfect, and the glorious face of Christ seemed more definite to me than ever before, and it seemed more tender, more blessed. I sat in a corner and cried, not emotionally, but spiritually. There is a difference, for mine were the tears that spring from the heart of sub-conscious life.

Afterwards I went back to my home to find the rooms filled with flowers—flowers that he had sent me, with the thought that the evening would bring him to me. The hours sped by and in the afternoon a sweet woman came to see me.

“I am so lonely, so lonely,” she said. “I just strolled down to see you. Christmas is such a terrible reminder.”

How sorry I felt for her and how I longed to share my happiness with her. Of course that I could not do—it was only for me, that day; it was my secret and I wondered if she guessed about my lover with the beautiful voice and hair!

He came—and I shall not say anything about that evening. It was too unique. I could never put it into words, the wonder and beauty of it and how completely absorbed he was in me. We sat by the fire gazing into the heart of our dreams and I thought of my friend, so desolate and utterly alone! And I remembered the low moan that escaped her lips unconsciously, and the quality of it frightened me, for it was the cry of a soul in torture, the cry of one without hope!

So many days of perfect love!

Do you know what that means, my friend? When all else is forgotten—and the health, the pure joy that comes with it! The fun, the sunshine, the smiles, the tears; tears that come from too much happiness; two instruments perfectly atuned—virile, keen, refined; mingling their smiles, their kisses, their tears . . . !

I had a way of wearing pink in those days; it seemed the only color that perfectly expressed my state of mind; for there were mixed elements in my love for him, there was maternal love as well as romantic love, and, too, there is a warmth, as you know, about pink; it seems to send all of the blue things away, leaving only the rosy ones.

Besides a spiritual union and a physical union there was something more. "There is an exchange between the body cells and a nourishment of each other by the interchange of finest and subtlest elements." These are the words of Edward Carpenter.

I resented the association with his wife, not only because of very human reasons of jealousy and pride, but for pathological reasons.

I knew that she was interfering, intruding, distorting our union, distorting it by her continuous presence, that he could not help bringing something of her to me. She was in his personality, in that fine something known as magnetism, she was always there, always, and she tortured me. It was doubly cruel for the reason that I knew that I was his rightful mate. *He was exquisitely fine; his delicate but strong body was beautiful;* his personality virile and patrician, and this his wife sensed but did not fully realize, for she was a woman of only ordinary intelligence. Imagine the pictures I held of her, sliding, gliding, walking stark through our love! When he left me he was perfectly polarized, so to speak; his whole personality was balanced, virile, for I gave him strength and then he left me and went to her . . . !

There is a story by Kipling in which a woman is released from purgatory because she had seen her lover in the arms of another woman and in this instant had suffered enough to compensate for her sins. Only a woman who has suffered in this way knows that this is the most poignant degree of suf-

fering. If men knew the agony they cause by their lack of fidelity and of how they cheat themselves they would change their code, their polygamist tendencies, for nature always punishes inconsistency. If in no other way, the disloyal one is punished by his inability to give or to receive the perfect love, for light ideals and unmoral living dulls the finer sensibilities and the calibre of the man changes, becoming negative, dormant or degenerate. The soul that remains beautiful may be unhappy, but still maintains its power to give and to receive beauty.

When I told him that his wife's presence was breaking my heart, I was not exaggerating. It was not only doing that, but breaking my body, for the very *cells of my being rebelled!* I loved him so completely that it was either a happiness, keen and exquisite, or an agony equally complete. I resented her physically, the very atoms of my body seemed to fly at her! The magnetism, the electricity of me, seemed to have *motion* when I thought of her! It made me *reel*—it infuriated me!

Now I had no such provincial and false idea that all men were polygamists and that

all men regarded love and its realization lightly, for I knew that in art, in poetry, in mysticism, in all idealistic things, that it was man who had reached the highest pinnacle of perfection, so that I was certain that men did exist who possessed ideals and feelings as fine as women. Realizing that he was not fine in this way, that he was disloyal, I determined to give him up. I could not endure it, my position was impossible. And yet—I could not give him up—then.

And then an amazing and almost laughable realization came to me. She knew and did not know. That sounds strange, doesn't it? But let me explain it to you. She knew sub-consciously and did not know consciously. She was not developed psychically enough to remember in her mind what her soul had told her. Here we were, the three of us, meeting in our sleep (in what ignorant people call silly dreams and what the mystics know to be the great sub-conscious life, where everything is known), talking about our love, our strange position. The soul knows everything and running away could not change the condition or mislead her as it could on the ob-

jective plane. *We all knew and there was no way to elude each other!* It was funny, that part of it; and funnier still that the next day, after such close contact and realization in the Etheric world, that we should go on in our old conventional way, leading our lives in the way we thought best adapted to deceive each other!

I remembered the experience of our sub-conscious life, the revelation of the night, because I had learned to “dream true.” I then realized the *usefulness* of occult law as well as the beauty of it, and I realized that to remember a Revelation was to possess a joy that brought a power too subtle and too great to be put into mere words.

I had developed this gift through suffering. I was then glad of the suffering, for it was that which opened my eyes, it was that which had brought the reward, the compensation, for the long, dreary days in the past when human sympathy was denied me, only that I might find, through this denial, the genius of solitude, the divinity of *silence*—the revelation in sleep.

SHARON

The things of the soul can never be forgotten.

They are like a garland of flowers that link our heart to the great universal mind and remain as the beautiful things of Paradise; each flower having been created through some beautiful moment and perhaps Sharon will be a flower—a symbol—and some day I will live in its loveliness again! But just the same I wish that the memory could grow fainter, that Sharon might be forgot. Sharon! Sharon! If I could only tear these words out of my heart. They seemed to shout themselves to me and I could not forget. . . .

I wondered why it had affected me keenly, why it had stamped itself thus upon my soul. It had been exquisite, but there had been

many such evenings and in *so* many beautiful places! I began to analyze it and I realized this: his soul was awake that night, it had answered a call from another soul, for he said:

“I feel that death is near, I feel that something is going to happen, I feel a *presence*, it is telling me something, I can almost touch it. Can you?”

This was the first time he had spoken of the things that *I* knew about, these things of the occult world.

The next day he had a telegram saying that his father was dying. You see his soul had known it that night, for it was *functioning* then and, too, it was so close to mine that we had met on a higher plane where a tie was created, one that was strong and fine! In the stillness of the evening we had walked slowly to the edge of this quaint little town where we stood silently under a great oak tree. There was a strange sort of fence around which wild roses bloomed. We leaned upon it and looked across the grass into the trees and then into space, thinking of our love. The young moon was there, too, that

night and there were the flowers and the echo of the sea and some strange little crickets that come out on such evenings. They seemed so alive, so virile, so keen, I thought they were happy to have us there! The leaves from the great tree touched us and each time they did they left a caress, freshness and understanding. Whatever it was, I have never since been able to see trees without a definite feeling of kinship! They respond in their own particular way. . . .

I wondered how people, some people, loved to live on memories. It seemed to me that they had a tendency to hurt, to wound too terribly, but perhaps this was only when we had been disappointed in the person connected with them. I remember how he looked as he sat in the window in our strange little room, how the leaves again had brushed against the window and left the same kind of understanding, and how the odor of the lilacs and sweet peas had blown across the garden and how the quaint old clock struck the hour of twelve! How I walked toward the window where he was seated, and how he suddenly got up and took me in his arms, and how I re-

sponded to it, as a dying child does to its mother, sinking deep into the heart of love. And I remember, too, that we did not say anything—we couldn't—and how the pinkness in my gown showed in the night and how his kisses brought tears to my eyes because of their beauty, for there was a tangible and potent sweetness in his kisses; a sweetness born of refinement. They were kisses that were welcome to the soul! They had a fragrance and a blessing. The tears coursed down my cheeks, falling first on his hair and then to the softness of my gown. And that is another reason that I could never forget Sharon, for it was there that tenderness was born. . . .

Why is it that we must be happy and then suffer so? Is it that lilies may bloom in Paradise? Is the exaltation, born of a beautiful grief, the occult force that creates beauty, which remains as a symbol of our lovely moments on earth? Or is it merely that little children may walk among them? Is it that whiteness is demanded there in order that the echo of music may sink into the heart of a flower and the artist be glad? I

do not know—I only wish that the perfume of the lilies would become faint and the memory of Sharon forgot . . . !

And then, my dear—I wonder if I can tell you this? I have told you of Sharon, of our glorious year together, but I have not told you this—and somehow I want to tell you!

Of course I have told you so much of him—the happiness, the suffering, the suspense, the whole state of things. After a while the time came when I realized that our love was a thing that had become tangible and alive. I knew that something as sweet as one of God's angels had become a part of me. I knew that the expression of our perfect love—his love and mine had made it so—I was to be the mother of his child. Strange emotions of thankfulness, of exaltation, of gladness, filled my being. Holy, tender tears coursed down my cheeks and fell upon my heart, tears of happiness and sadness guarding each moment of this, my new life with sacred loyalty and devotion.

And then I knew that it could not be! I knew that this child of love, that of the soul, mind and body *could* not live! This soul

called out of Paradise through our great love must die—and why? Because of the world. Because of conventionality. Because of ignorance. This child of the spirit must not be allowed to live because people would put a stigma upon it. Idle minds that had never known the divinity of love, narrow minds protesting their belief in orthodox rules and at the same time being guilty of the greatest sin, union without love—minds distorted by sensuality and vulgarity, those too brainless to realize that all genius springs from true and natural mating, whether it be orthodox or not; those too small to grasp the beauty of real love—all would condemn this beautiful soul born of an exquisite union to annihilation; while *their* sordid children born of hypocrisy and mere passion could live because the law protected them!

Days passed and each day brought forth the bitterness, the cruelty of life. And my poor love, how crushed he was. For hours we would sit here before the fire looking into the flame and then into the ashes. Sometimes we would sit for hours without speaking. I would put his head upon my shoulder, my

tears falling upon his beautiful hair, and we said nothing. One evening I was sitting at his feet again, gazing into the ashes. Suddenly I put my hand up to his face and I felt tears upon my hands.

“What is it—what is it, dearest?”

“Nothing, my angel, nothing!”

We continued our silence like two lost children in a dark night!

Suddenly, without warning, he sprang up hurriedly and threw himself into my arms, sobbing like a child.

“I cannot stand it! I cannot stand it! It’s too cruel—the little baby . . . !”

I never saw any one so desperate, so intense in grief.

“And you—you——” he sobbed. “It may kill you, but you must go before it is too late.”

“Too late for what?” I cried. “I cannot go, I won’t go, I don’t care about the world,” I assured him, and yet I knew in my heart that it must be. . . .

I cannot tell you the rest of it, my friend, there are some things that cannot be put into words, but I want—(oh, my God!—how can I

live and remember this)—I do not know, I do not know—only I awakened one bright morning with a nurse and a kind doctor bending over me. They were both crying softly. The nurse said to me:

“Don’t try to talk, dear. We know, we understand. You told us all about it in your sleep—don’t talk now!”

“I am not bad, nurse,” I cried. “I loved him so, too much for this world, that is why I am here!”

“We can never love enough for the *other world*,” she answered tenderly. “It is *that* love which brings the angels down to earth.”

“I cannot bear it, nurse, it was so beautiful—so sweet. Why does God allow our hearts to be torn this way?”

“Don’t talk,” she said again. “It is gone now. Your case is only one among thousands—they come here every day.”

“You have saved me and I thank you, but did you ever *love* anyone, nurse?” I said.

“Yes,” she answered. “That is why I am *here*. I understand.”

In a few hours they brought me home. My

lover opened the door and winced as he caught sight of my white face and realized what had happened. Gently he put me upon the bed, covering my poor body with his coat, kissing me reverently without speaking.

In a few moments we were alone. We did not say anything and he began to walk around the room and tried to find something for me, and he was trying to smile.

"What shall I bring you, dearest?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said, but after a while I added: "Bring me my little testament. There it is on the table."

He gave it to me. I opened it and strangely enough I opened to a page and my eyes fell upon these three words: "*God is love.*"

"Come," I said. "Come and read this! *We know that this is true. Do we not?*"

"Love begins in Heaven and it ends there," I said. "An angel has just gone back from where it came—that is all—I am sure—but yet *I am so afraid it is just a little bit lonely. . . .*"

It was in one of my dreams. I saw him

pictured in that other world as a little shepherd.

Now of course that seems terribly simple, or perhaps absurd, but if you could have seen the expression that I saw—the tenderness, the gentleness and the absolute helplessness—you would understand. Suddenly the symbol of the thing appeared to me. You know in all of the mystic legends, even with the beautiful Christ, this symbol has been used. There is a certain artistic charm in it, too. Think of the paintings of Raphael and so many of the artists! Another thing occurred to me psychically, that the reason his soul had materialized this way was on account of the sweetness in his nature, that his soul had qualities in it lovely enough to express itself this way! And then I wished I had not seen it, for it made the mother in me yearn with an unendurable tenderness for him. *It made the separation unbearable.* Nothing, not even music, could express the emotion it caused me, because it could not be sweet enough; only the music of the young leaves, rose petals and dew-drops could create a melody exquisite enough, and this I could

not hear, for my ears were not fine enough.

Again I had a dream. As the stars came up in the night, they kissed only the small clouds as they passed, and the young moon shown only for young lovers, the nightingale sang only for the dawn and the sun gave warmth only with its first rays to the little flowers on earth!

At first I could not understand this dream, but finally it was made clear to me—that there was a maternal instinct in the whole scheme of things, in all nature, that certain hours were given exclusively to the blessing of little things so that they might retain their fresh loveliness and remain in an immaculate beauty in so chaste a way that only artists and young mothers could comprehend—it would be *reserved* for them! Nature, which seems so generous, is after all an exclusionist—it is full of surprises. . . .

Are we intended to suffer so that we may learn how to aspire? Do we thus lift ourselves above earthly things into the heart of Paradise, and are some of us more particularly wanted in that beautiful realm where

the immortals dwell? May we there catch the harmony of the infinite music, so that our hearts will not be strangers to that life which comes after death?

Are we initiated here so that we will be known *there*? And does this come through sorrow?

THE WALK

I REMEMBER a day when I walked behind his wife.

It was a most significant thing to me. You see I dared not walk up to her, I had to stay behind, not only then, but always. How terrible this realization was! There were all kinds of emotions in my heart that day, of indignation, rebellion and wounded pride, as I walked slowly behind the woman for whose husband I had sacrificed everything, and he was walking *happily* with her.

I pictured their home life together. It was a sweet little home. It was small, too small—so small that they could not miss being together. I could picture their comradeship, the sharing of mutual joys and sorrows. If it had only been a big house, or if they had

been on bad terms, or if she were older, or if she were uglier it would have been easier! I thought that I must tell someone. I could not stand it alone; but the world would, of course, condemn me because he was married. The average person forgets that fate is not a respecter of marriage and that the sentimental idea that one is *breaking up a home* is an absurd one, for in modern life the home is as a rule already broken up, or about to be, by someone if the husband is sufficiently attractive. Men of the world lead their lives as it pleases them. Our love had been so *spontaneous* it did not think of the wife or the circumstances, and is it not a fact that the average married woman is either indifferent or definitely bored with her husband? Of course there are charming exceptions to the rule, but they are rare.

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I had wanted to catch him off guard, as it were. I wanted to see him with her, not conventionally, but naturally. The next Sunday morning I went again for a walk. It was a grey, unhappy day and I walked casually along the street. Suddenly I saw before me

two happy faces; the expression was that of people who understood each other, of people who love, of people who were happy. It was too late to turn away, too late to do anything, I had to go on. I passed them so closely that I might have touched them. He saw me and started a bit. I bowed solemnly and heard her say, "Who is she? Who is she?" I did not hear his answer, but "Who is she? Who is she?" echoed in my ears. At first these words meant nothing, then deeper, farther into my mind they went, "Who is she? Who is she?" Indeed I thought, yes—*Who is she?*

The picture suddenly took form in my mind. It had color as pictures must have, but the colors were dim and very blue. They seemed to smile wistfully. The picture was that of a woman who had given everything, not in the usual conception of that word, but of the woman who had *something* to give and had given it gladly, *had given joyously and with pride!*

There was music in the air, but it was so faint. There was perfume, there always is where there is love. There was strength

and beauty, and these were peculiarly intermingled by a little thing—by *tenderness*, for I had loved him tenderly, that was what had bound me to him, so strangely, so completely! It was such a *little* thing! This frightened me as I walked on, blindly crossing the street, almost walking into a car. That was it, I thought, this tenderness that was holding me, causing me to be humbled, to be humiliated—to be made ridiculous—and it is ever thus, the *maternal* instinct is the last thing that dies in a woman.

I walked on until I came to a church. I had to rest somewhere. I walked in and sat down in a bewildered state. Finally I saw the candles and a dim figure walking about. I must go near the candles, I thought, they are so bright, so lovely. “They are so warm and I am so far away and I am alone! Perhaps the candles will tell me something, they must,” I thought as I slowly walked up to the altar.

A poor woman was sobbing at the feet of a saint. We seemed alone there. for there were no Vespers. She said:

“I *did* give you bread for your poor, I *did*

feed your sheep, I *did* love you, and yet you do not help me. . . .”

Impulsively I touched her arm and I said:

“Forgive me. What is it, tell me? Let me help you.”

Grasping my hand, she kissed it eagerly, humbly.

“He did help me after all,” she said dreamily, half to the statue, half to me. “Kind lady, help me and I will help you!”

“Help me?” I answered, with a tinge of sarcasm. “No one can help me and *you* would not understand!”

“Let us go into the corner and talk. Let me see what I can do for you. You are so young, so kind,” she said, as she got up to her feet. “Tell me first; I am ignorant, but I am wise. Can you understand that, dear lady?”

“Yes,” I said. “I will tell you. I don’t mind, but I don’t think you can understand. . . .”

I talked to her. She sat and thought a while and then she said very strangely:

“Kind lady,” she began in a very humble but sweet manner, “let us be quiet for a while

and then something will come to me; the angels will tell me what to say to you."

How strange, I thought. I wonder if the angels ever do!

Some children walked in and knelt by us; the candle flickered and died, leaving a blessing. The flowers at the altar bent their heads in quiet meditation, an old man limped up the aisle and then the woman looked at me dreamily, her fingers pulling at her black dress, her mouth twitching in a terrible earnestness.

"You have told me," she said, "that it was a little thing that held you to this man, and I tell you that a little thing will also take you from him. Watch and be careful. Perhaps some day he will lie to you and you will then be free, for you will no longer respect him."

"That would be a big thing," I answered hurriedly. "A lie is the only thing that I cannot forgive."

"Yes," she said eagerly. "Don't you see, don't you see, that is it; it will be a *little* thing that will cause you to know about the lie. Pardon me, sweet lady, for using the word lie, but it is the only way I can make myself clear."

"But how do you know?" I said hurriedly, interrupting her.

"I don't know," she answered, "how I know, but it is given me to see when I sit in church this way. Something tells me, and I know that what I am telling you is true. You will suffer at first and then it will just die out quietly, like the candle there! Do you see it?"

I got up hurriedly and spoke abruptly. "I must go, I must get some air. Thank you," and walked swiftly out of the church.

When I got to the street I suddenly remembered my selfishness. I had not kept my promise. I had said that I would help her too. I rushed back to find her. She was walking down the stairs into the street.

"I am sorry, so sorry," I said. "I forgot for a minute. What can I do for you?"

"You have done it," she said graciously.

"I—I have done nothing!"

"Yes," she said. "You have. You have helped me. That is what I prayed for. I prayed to be awakened, to have some interest in life, to do something for someone; you thought it was money that I wanted, didn't

you? No, it was for the return of my soul that I prayed, it had left me for such a long time. . . .”

I went back to my home with this strange incident in my mind.

A few weeks afterwards it came to me.

It was such a little way that I found out about the duplicity of him—the rank hypocrisy in which he lived. He had tried to make us both believe that we were *first* in his heart: his kissing her and then coming here, kissing me with her kiss upon his lips and a lie! *And this is what he brought me—her kiss and a lie!*

Suddenly he became repellent to me and as I looked into his face it no longer seemed beautiful to me; it was the face of a criminal, *for to play with real love is a deep sin.*

There were holes in my heart, I know. There is an old Eastern belief that when one suffers deeply, the astral is penetrated and the soul itself is hurt. If one could see deeply, clearly enough, they would see the scars. How terrible are little things and how insidious, for that short walk of theirs did

more to hurt me than anything that had happened. It was all so significant; their step, their smile, the very personality of the thing breathed of his insincerity. I to suffer shock and disappointment and she to live in a fool's Paradise! At least I was spared the latter, and it is better to know the truth than to be deluded, for to be cheated out of *reality* is a dreadful thing. There is something grotesque about it . . . !

Somehow I pitied her, for there was something in her walk, I do not know what, whether it was fatigue, illness or a sort of charming poise, but there was a presence about her; she looked like one of the predestined, she belonged to those who are soon to die and who know it in a way, but not definitely enough to cause conscious unhappiness.

How strange it seemed. I do not know how I felt, it staggered me. I could not recover from the close contact with his wife and I knew that she was the one that he really loved and that I was of no permanent importance.

I wondered how I had ever endured him so long, for he was skilfully deceiving us both,

and yet she, too, was a little absurd. I saw the farce of the situation and how it is better to be too cynical than too credulous. I think I thought it all out mechanically. In sorrow, I suppose it is quite natural to repeat one's self, but I actually said her words over to myself, "*Who is she? Who is she?*"

She haunted me. It was not a feeling of conscience, it was just something about her that I could not forget; perhaps it was merely the strangeness of seeing someone so close to him! I pictured their wedding—their first days together—her face as she turned from the altar, their happiness together, and I knew that so sweet a tie must reassert itself. It is a psychic fact as well as a romantic one, for life goes around in a circle and when certain memories come to our minds, they come with the same freshness and virility as the day they happened. That is why it is possible to live in a memory, for the thing *really* happens again!

Somehow I could see her smile on that wedding day of theirs! I could see his boyish face beaming with joy. I knew then that this memory was in his mind, that was why he

looked at his watch in the evenings when he came to see me; that he was living that thing over in his mind; it was the time for it to come out in the Circle, and then this thought burst vindictively upon me that I *must* win in the end! Some day our life together would live in his mind again and then she would be dead to him at that time, for I had owned him more completely than she, for I, as an individual, was more intense in my love. I was a stronger woman in every way than she and some day the vibration of me would strike him like a mighty force! And I was glad! I hoped he would suffer immeasurably . . . !

I realized that I had been intoxicated, absorbed in him, that my thought of him had the power of a vice over me. I was utterly helpless to break away from his influence. Days of anguish, hours of eternity of trying to keep away, of parting, of quick reconciliation, of jealousy, which poisoned and obsessed; humiliation—of forgetting pride, of doing utterly foreign things, of fighting him as I would a disease, to finally succumb.

The next morning was cold and bleak and

there was a longing in the air. It was the kind of day when one feels that the sun must break through the heavy clouds. But it never does—the kind of a day when one waits for the birds to sing, but there is no singing. The day is one great long shadow, deeply enveloped in grey.

I was afraid to walk, I was so bewildered—I was afraid of the traffic, and at home I was afraid of myself and the shadows there. People were a nuisance, it meant talking conventionally when the heart was crushed, and my brain too numb for study. It simply had to be a day of monotonous pain, without exaltation, which comes in keen grief, of *dull* grief which is so hard to bear.

How terrible it was that one person had the power to take life from you, to take ambition away, to make one inert, listless and inane! But then I thought of how wonderful it was that one person could make the earthly sunshine dim in contrast to the radiance in one's heart, how marvelous it was to know revelation through this force; to know that love is a principle—and yet this day I could not feel any of the things that I knew and

believed in. I was too utterly weary, for God himself had turned His face away. A terrible realization came to me. I saw that once having known love in its sublime sense that one became attached to a plane, that one became a part of divine mind where mental illumination and spiritual nobility live, and the sudden change from that plane was a shock to the *soul*.

There seemed no way to reach again that state of mind where smiles come freely. My heart was made desolate and I was alone on my bed, too dulled, too utterly listless to reason or to hope any more. I was dwelling in a mental purgatory where shadows deepen in the black night, where weird demons utter words of desperate things to me, speeding me on toward death. Somehow they jeered and laughed at me, at life, at everything and whispered in my ears horrible tempting things. One seemed to say suicide, another shrieked opium in my ear, another drink, while another skilfully pictured my future, persuading me that life was a futile and black thing. Of course these were elementals, those astral forms that hover so closely about the earth;

they were driving me toward melancholia and complete collapse. I had to run away from them to the air, to the woods, to the silence, where the higher forces might come to me.

THE COUNTRY

DOUGLAS saw my state of mind and asked me to leave the city to go South as a governess on an old plantation in South Carolina. The mother of the children was dead. The children lived there with their grandparents and an old aunt. The father spent most of his time in New York. I decided to go and left within a few days.

I was driven from the Southern station to the plantation in an old but quaint carriage. As I drove up to the beautiful but old place a strange feeling possessed me. It was a feeling, not of loneliness, but of fear. At first I thought it was the sudden change, the quiet. I recalled the quietness of the New England home and how I disliked it, but in such a different way because of its narrow-

ness and monotony. I had no psychic dread of it as I had of this place. The house, the entire situation, was beautiful and apparently peaceful, it was Colonial and white and inclined to be magnificent.

As I walked into the house a chill swept over my body, bringing a keen note of subconscious warning. Later I took a long walk in the woods with the children. Afterwards we sat in the garden, and yet this something still possessed me. It was a feeling of apprehension. That afternoon I let the children ride on their ponies. They were such little ponies and they were quite accustomed to them that I had no fear. The little girl galloped away happily.

Suddenly I heard a wild shriek, that of a woman, and I saw the small pony dragging the little girl. One foot was caught in the stirrup, while her body was dragging on the ground. The pony was running toward the woodpile, where there were large chips and heavy pieces of wood. As I ran nearer I saw an upturned axe. The pony was getting nearer to it. A servant was staring with horror. I ran forward, while the others stood

motionless, shouting to me not to run, that I would frighten the pony all the more. This I realized and stopped, while suddenly without any apparent reason the pony stood still. The child was wise enough to twist her foot in the other direction, which allowed her to slip out and fall to the ground. I was shocked beyond expression. What a strange beginning, I thought.

The next day we went to the orchard to gather peach blossoms. There were fruit trees of all kinds; we stayed there a long time and I still sensed a sinister atmosphere. Undoubtedly there was a strangeness about this old place, I thought.

What is it? What is it? The thought came repeatedly, especially when I gazed into the eyes of the little girl, who had an expression as though certain that something unpleasant would happen.

A few days passed rather peacefully when, one afternoon as I was sitting under a bower of Marshall Neil roses at the east end of the house, I looked up suddenly and there stood in front of me the old nurse, or Mammy, as the children called her. She had a look of

awe in her face. She was affecting a great calm, when she said slowly, quietly:

"Don't be frightened, honey, but where is Marse Edwin?"

"I don't know," I said. "He asked to go to his grandmother."

"Yes, but he ain't there, honey, and he ain't nowhere, because I have been looking everywhere; even down by the pond and under the trees, and everywhere he goes, and he ain't there, honey, I tell you, he ain't there."

Getting up slowly, I whispered: "I will look for him. Say nothing. I am sure he is around." I walked silently about the place, calling to him, with old Mammy at my heels, who groaned piteously, praying that nothing would happen to the handsome little fellow.

Finally our voices grew louder and the old people heard us and suddenly came out, followed by the servants, and in a few seconds, just as though the message had been telegraphed about the place, without asking any questions, they all began crying out at once:

"Edwin, Edwin, where are you, Edwin?"

But there was no answer. We looked for an hour. The old people were white with

fear, we were all sick with dread, when quietly, calmly a heavy counterpane (as they call it in the South) that was hanging over a wash-line opened and out walked Edwin.

"Why didn't you answer?" we all said, as with one voice.

"I was afraid," he said.

"Why were you afraid?"

"I don't know. At first I thought it was nothing, then I got frightened myself and I was afraid to come out, the voices sounded so strange. I thought it was the bad fairies calling me, until Mammy passed so close and I was not afraid any more."

Of course it was a trifling incident, and yet I was just as unstrung as though something serious had happened.

"Something else is going to happen," the old Mammy said as she walked into the house, "it always comes in threes."

A few weeks passed on, and then the old aunt died. No one seemed to care very much about her, she was very old and cross and the children hated her. Her son was telegraphed for. It was a cold and rainy night; the body lay in the room downstairs, while I

spent my time keeping the children upstairs, so that they would not see the corpse.

The wind shook the shutters; the trees bowed their heads vehemently, in a vindictive sort of way.

At about two o'clock in the morning, after I had gotten the children to sleep, I was so tired that I went to the window to sit for a minute to rest so that I might sleep. In the distance I heard the sound of vehicles approaching; the sounds grew nearer and nearer. Opening the shutters, I looked out. Two servants were opening the gate. One of them held a dull tallow candle which was covered with glass; the wind blew in such a way that the flame almost went out and then the candle settled again into a steady light.

The vehicle stopped, and as I looked through the shutters I saw the servants lift a black coffin to the ground. Just then the clouds broke for a minute and the lantern light flashed itself upon a silver piece on the black coffin while it was being lifted to the ground. Slowly they took it up again and passed underneath my window. It was the first time I had ever seen a coffin, and how

sinister, how bleak, it looked! What a strange picture it made! These dark figures carrying it into the night. And stranger still, and very sad, I thought, nobody seemed to care very much; this gave me a strange feeling of pity and wonder.

At last I went to my bed, to be awakened early by the morning sun, it was so clear and bright.

I took the children into the garden and gathered some japonicas, those wonderful strong flowers that grow in the cold. I took one and put it on the coffin. This I had to do, and as I walked into the old house I thought, "At least the son will be sorry; somebody ought to be sorry!"

The servants said that they had expected the son in the night, but he had not come, perhaps on account of the storm. I remembered, though, that the rain had suddenly stopped and the moon had come up. They had been up all night waiting; it was then eleven and he had not come.

I looked down the long passage-way into the garden and saw an old negro servant approaching. His head was bowed and he

looked a little bit afraid. Coming slowly up the stairs, he said:

"I want to see Mis' Mary." He stood with his hat in his hand, waiting for her to come out. She came, and then I heard a short but very sharp cry, and I ran toward her, to Mis' Mary, the sweet little lady, grandmother of the children.

"What is it?" I said. "What is it?"

"Robert, Robert!" she said, and fell into a chair.

I then addressed my questions to the old negro man. He told me that Marse Robert was dead; that he had found him lying under his horse on the muddy hill that lead to the creek, just two miles from the house; his horse had slipped and fallen on top of him.

"He was crushed to death," said the old servant.

All night long that horse must have laid on Marse Robert, for when I found them at dawn this morning the horse was full of cuts, showing that Marse Robert had taken his pocket-knife out of his pocket and jabbed the horse many times, trying to make him get up. The

horse's leg had been broken by the fall and he could not get up.

The man's body was crushed, although he was hardly cold when the negro found him, but the horse was alive. They were lying in the mud at the edge of the stream, with only the wind to answer his call and only the rain to beat upon the mangled body.

There was nothing to do, I just walked away in a bewildered sort of state, and as I did so I picked up a japonica, a white one this time, and put it in the place of the red one. I just had to do something, and I remembered, too, that she had loved him so and now they were together. I was amazed as I looked into the face of this woman, for she really had changed: she was now beautifully white and she had learned how to smile in the night! The hardness had all gone and her face was very sweet. How beautiful death makes everyone, I thought, but how could dead people smile? When the spirit is gone, what is there to smile? *And this I could not understand!*

Many evenings I spent with the children's

grandparents sitting before the large wood fire. Back of it was a table upon which the tall candles threw their light. I never saw two old people who so loved each other. It was a beautiful thing to see.

After a few days I made up my mind to leave, the place was so lonesome. But the grandparents were very sweet and insisted upon my remaining, so I promised to stay. The long winter passed and April came with its sunshine; the flowers and the bushes looked as though they were anxious to break into roses, the hyacinths and narcissuses were beautiful: the violets were large and fragrant and the green things grew everywhere, as though gone wild with the joy of living.

May came, everything seemed perfectly at rest, and yet that feeling of fear still dominated me.

One warm evening we all went to our rooms early. It had been a listless day and the children were tired. We walked slowly up the stairs to our rooms. The children went to sleep at ten. I went downstairs for a short while and then myself retired. At twelve I awakened after only a few seconds of sleep

and went to the window. There was no sound except the incessant kicking of the horses on the stable floor and the occasional barking of a dog. The moon was very bright and the shadows made strange pictures under the great oak trees. These seemed to annoy the dogs; they barked maliciously in the quiet night. After an hour I went to my bed, falling into a heavy sleep. Suddenly I heard a scream; it was a woman's voice; not one of pain, but of horror. Rushing toward the door, I grabbed an oil lamp and ran down the stairs, the children following me like little ghosts. Rushing toward the grandparents' room, I found the grandmother ringing her hands in despair and saying piteously:

“It is four o'clock, it is four o'clock, and my husband has not come in yet! Oh, God! why did I sleep!” And then again to herself, “Oh, my God! why did I sleep!”

Not waiting to hear any more, I rushed outside, calling to the servants to come from their quarters; the children crying with me and muttering to themselves, “Something has happened to Grandpapa, Grandpapa is lost!”

The servants rushed out, each one taking a lantern and a different path, while the children still followed me, calling to the old lady not to come, but she followed us, saying:

“Go to the stable. Perhaps the horses have hurt him. Go—go to the horses, I say!”

We went, but there was no one to be seen. We ran to the front garden, to the back garden, *everywhere*. Finally the little girl with her strange blue eyes, who always seemed to feel things, said: “I feel that grandpapa is in the summer house, let us go there.”

Running toward it, I stopped suddenly as I caught sight of a black figure lying in the doorway. The face was upturned and terribly white and the moon shone directly on it; there was a gash in his head, the blood trickled steadily, slowly down his face. He was moaning. He was alive.

“Go back,” I said to the poor little grandmother. “Go back.” But she followed me, muttering words of prayer and fear.

Swiftly the servants took him up and carried him to the house, while the children shrieked for their Mammy to come from her cabin at the foot of the hill. Their shrill

little voices echoed down the valley against the hillside.

I walked slowly behind the limp figure in a dazed sort of way. I remembered looking into the sky and thinking how strange it was. It was what the negroes called a "mackerel sky," it gave a weird look to the heavens and as long as I live I shall never see clouds in the sky like that without thinking of the horror of that white face upturned to the moon!

Soon the doctor came and said that the old gentleman had had a stroke, and in his fall had struck his head upon the stone. He lived for ten days, breathing deeply, strongly, as though refusing to die; finally the end came about four in the afternoon.

Telegrams were sent to all of the relatives and in another day they began to come. I did not know that one family could have so many relatives and such lovely ones. They were all so handsome, so chivalrous, so sweet, and there was a rare dignity in their sorrow. Every hour another carriage appeared, and as these gentle people came up the steps into the great hallway I realized that the South

was right in claiming not only aristocracy but beauty, gentleness and grace. That old South, that sweet, dead South which one had to go and see. They were not the kind of Southerners who come to New York, for they are too contented to leave their old homes and perhaps too wise; they live there in their dreams of the ante-bellum days, cherishing their sweet homes, their ideals, still nourishing the old servants; wearing their quaint lace caps and strange bonnets; preserving their own individualism, not in arrogance or in egotism but in pride and wisdom born of a refinement perfect and consistent!

This pride was somehow transmitted, even to the servants, who possessed the highest ideals of courtesy and hospitality. The old Mammy was not a mere trained servant, an automaton, but a character, strong and well defined.

And then they took him away, this quaint old gentleman of the South. At first the Episcopal service was read. There was some quiet music and many white roses. That was all they had. It was so simple and chaste.

We walked to the family cemetery where they put him down into the earth. At first this shocked me, but later it did not seem so cold, so bleak, for with each dull thud of the earth that fell upon the black coffin, a flower would burst through and something seemed to say:

“It is the earth that he loved so: it was the earth that nourished his trees, his flowers and the old plantation! It was this, too, for which he had fought, in his own particular and gallant way. So how could it be cruel to put him to sleep there?”

And as I looked at the lovely faces standing about the grave, I thought how different it is here! Usually a mere grandfather's death is a casual thing, a something to be expected and not to be particularly lamented, but here it was different—a *nobleman had died!* Someone was gone who could not be replaced; and it meant the dying of a race, an epoch, as well as the individual, a something that could never come again!

With each spade of earth I realized that these men had lived in an age unique in history, for they possessed the blue blood of

England and something more, this something which lives in Southern climates, the soul; and there was something more, a something born of the pioneer days. *It was courage and infinite pride!*

Slowly we walked home through the fern-gathered paths. Not a word was said, and as I looked toward the house I saw something that I can never forget. I saw his wife, the little old-fashioned lady, sitting straight up in a chair, calmly waiting our return. She was sitting there in gentleness and supreme dignity, and, as we walked up the steps, she stood up in her stately way and greeted us with a *smile*. I pressed her hand and walked silently into the hall. Lovingly I looked back, and as I did I saw one great tear course down her cheek, but she still smiled! Again much was made clear that at once had seemed fantastic to me—that the South was justified in saying, “Our women are divine.”

In a few days my work was ended for the season and I left. As I drove down the stately driveway toward the gate that opened the way into the world again I looked back and thought: “I must go, I am glad to go, it

has all been so sad''—yet I had learned something there: that even sorrow could be beautiful. *An old lady had taught me that!*

SATURN REIGNS

IT WAS the early morning. The sun was just coming up. I never saw the sunshine so golden as it was there. It came up at the back of the house where there were no trees. It seemed to burst suddenly out of the sky and come toward the garden, sending its rays upon the dewdrops to melt them into the heart of the flowers. Then it came closer and closer, the rays falling through the green trees in the front garden, and then on toward the grass and the pebbled walks.

There was a sort of glory about that place and as I looked back and saw the yellow roses, the goldenrod and the green foliage for the last time I seemed to really live the old days over again, those of which I had been told, those quaint days of the early South. In

spite of the sadness and the shocks I had experienced on that old plantation I had learned something, I had learned the meaning of Tagore's words:

"I understand the voice of your stars and the silence of your trees."

As I drove away my heart sang with happiness, a strange happiness, one that is welcome to the soul. Happiness—because I had found myself. I knew this because I suddenly began to regret my departure. I realized I was leaving beauty behind me, that I was going to the city where life assumed a different meaning, where the artificial is more potent than the real, where peace ends and the struggle begins. And what was it all about? What was the struggle for? Was it not more for sensuous stimulation, for vanity, for the eternal call of the ego?

I drove on reluctantly and yet somehow I had to go on. It is ever thus with youth and perhaps it is better so. One must live at times in the strife of things, with people, with new ideas, with materialism, so as to make one's place in the world. But I knew that I should always have that silent longing for the

stars and the trees, the roses and the early mornings, the dusk and the crescent moon! And as I thought of it all I looked down the long road ahead of me and watched the trees. I saw how they leaned over the road so lovingly, as if trying to say something to the travellers who passed. It was a gentle sort of warning, a symbol and a plea not to forget the essence of things, the benediction of the country, the inspiration of nature. Then the whole world seemed to break into a beautiful smile and I passed on, tranquil and serene, journeying toward the great city with a new heart, a new mind and a *soul*.

When I reached the city, I came here to my simple room and I found a telegram awaiting me. It said:

Josephine died last evening. Pneumonia.

JACK.

The room went around in a circle. I could not see. It was all darkness and yet there was a great joy and my heart seemed to cry out, "God is good. I am so happy, so happy!"

Suddenly the thought came to me that I was rejoicing over death. How selfish, how cold it was of me, and yet I could not help it. I was not sorry and, too, I knew I had more right to him than she. She had been a mere woman in his life, while I was *his* woman and I knew it, and perhaps *she* knew it, and it seemed as though God had known it, too!

All that day I was too happy, too excited to write him. My position was delicate, he had been fond of her, it would be a tender memory with him, so what could I say? At midnight I wrote these few words to him.

Your telegram was received. There is nothing that I can say to you sincerely. I cannot truly sympathize, so I shall only say that I realize the awkwardness of your position and the delicacy of mine. I shall not come to you. When you want me, send for me. I shall be waiting.

CYNTHIA.

A few weeks passed and I had a short letter from him, then I wrote again and he

answered. The desire was so keen to go to him that I determined to leave New York for a while. I took a boat to the West Indies, remaining there for two months. It seemed a thousand years. A month passed and I had a telegram from him which did not mean anything one way or the other. The following Sunday morning I received a letter. It said:

I am going to marry Mary. Do not judge me too harshly.

It was his sister-in-law! She had always cared for him and had been there to sympathize at the psychological moment of his loss. I didn't cry out, I was frozen with horror, hatred and humiliation. I vividly recalled a report I had heard before the death of his wife, that it was his sister-in-law who really interested him. Indignation was a mild word for my mood. It was one of a cold, calculating desire to kill! He had tricked me, he had made a fool of me! I could never be happy again! The world had turned into ashes, there was nothing for me now! No one *could* help me!

For days I remained in bed. I could not lift my head. I was crushed and it seemed that it would ever be thus; and then, very gradually a wonderful thing happened! That something called hate, which is so closely allied to love, passed away and I felt a well-defined, consistent feeling of *disgust* for him. How could I grieve over a man whom I could not respect? He was not worth thinking about! That was true. My youth, my health, all going, for a *thing* like that. I could not think of him as a person, I could only think of him as a thing. It was this disgust that saved me and not pride, for pride is a weak, ill-shaped weapon in fighting real love, for love sweeps everything before it until it reaches that point which is invulnerable, that of a sincere contempt. The wrath, the emotionalism all slips away leaving only this hideous but wonderful antidote which enables one to swiftly change perspective and calmly set to work to live again, with an erect head, a wise mind and calm heart.

After a few weeks I began life anew, with a prayer in my heart. It was this:

Give me the exaltation, the dignity, of a noble love. Help me to so light my lamp that no idle wanderer will stop at my door. Make it so clear and so bright that only the great of soul will enter here. Let it be so bright that the vain will pass it by for the far red lights that burn in the mystic night. Let it be so tranquil that only the wise will comprehend it. Let it be so gentle that only the kind will heed it. Let it be so sweet that only the pure will love it. And teach me the simple things, so that I cannot lose my way. Teach me the higher laws, those of simplicity, faith and impersonal desire, for I know that to welcome the guest I must know how to wish, to hope and to smile. . . .

And gradually the days grew brighter. There was a presence in this little room; a something that was very sweet and close, something that helped me to aspire, to believe and to wait! There is genius in knowing how to wait. Sometimes I lost faith, I would slip back into the old personal way, but every time I did something brought me back again to a different sphere, a higher plane, and then I learned a thing that seemed a para-

dox, *that we are never alone when we are alone*. We are merely with a different manifestation of life. Sometimes the words of the dear little lady of the Southland came into my mind, when I thought of my isolation. These were the words she had quoted so often to me. They were significant and true:

“God works in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.”

So, after all, perhaps I was not cut off from the world; even in this little room; something, someone, would find me. *The right person if I thought the right way!* So I learned to believe that the life of Cinderella was as possible in life as in a story and I wondered if my prince wouldn't find me even in such a little place and in such a little way, by something dropped into the Ether, a *thought*, which would prove as tangible as a lost slipper, a cross sister and a magnificent ball . . . !

And with this new phase of my life I began to study again. Most of my days I spent at the piano, trying to practice, but unconsciously whenever I began to sing, I selected

those songs built on minor themes. Often I lost control of my voice, it would break into strange tones, discordant and hoarse. Everything seemed to elude me at times, I could get no results, even in my work. Sometimes I would get up and go to the window where I had some small plants: they seemed so fresh and young and the sun was shining through the window upon them while I gazed into the street.

One day when I had been standing there for some time in a sort of reverie I turned languidly away and walked toward the mirror. I did this sub-consciously, I suppose; it was an instinct, a desire to look into my own face again and see if that, too, had changed.

Glancing into the mirror, I said to myself, I still have youth, that is much, it is something to be thankful for. I went back to the piano determined to begin my work with renewed energy. I sat down and began a scale when suddenly, without any apparent reason, a picture of Chopin which was hanging immediately over the piano fell to the ground. As it did so the end of it struck me heavily

over my left eye. For a minute I was stunned, but the pain was not great and I dismissed the incident from my mind. In the evening, however, I noticed that it was blue and swollen. The next morning it pained me and I sent for a physician.

"Nothing," he said. "Nothing, it is only a temporary discomfort."

But in this he was wrong, for when he returned he said the eye tissue was injured and would have to be lanced. This he did, but so clumsily that a specialist who was called in afterwards said that the scar would remain indefinitely. When the bandage was removed, imagine my emotion when I glanced into the mirror and I realized that I was no longer pretty. Not only that, but that my expression was distorted! In books people are either artistically injured or effectively pale, but in real life it is different! There was nothing subtle about that scar, it was perfectly obvious. In all reason this seemed the last straw. It was too cruel to have lost *everything* and I was so young! Youth resents the intrusion of unbeautiful things! How it writhes and struggles under affliction!

How bitter, how grotesque and senseless it seems!

The first few weeks I endured emotions too keen and too numerous to put into words. And I hated life so! Not only so far as I was concerned, but the whole scheme of it seemed so futile. Poverty, loneliness, disappointment, failure, I could endure, but not ugliness; not merely because of vanity but because it offended the very soul of me, for I had the soul of an artist to whom beauty is truth, truth beauty and beauty God. I thought of this as applied in symbolism. Whenever a spiritual face, one of a mystic or a saint is pictured, it is expressed in beauty of some kind. These pictures always have either color, line or something lovely about them! They are at least pleasing to the eye, and I who loved beauty so much must live in an unfitting, unnatural body. Such thoughts crowded over me until madness became more potent than reason. I wanted so keenly to die; I wanted to kill myself; but I had not the courage—I was afraid. Seven such weeks of agony I endured.

Early one morning I awakened just at

dawn. I went to the window and looked out. It was a habit of mine, this custom of gazing out the window. I suppose it is so with all lonely people. As I stood there my hand touched one of the plants. I looked down and thought that this, too, was beautiful and yet it must die. I looked at the sun and I thought how glorious, how bright, and yet the shadows come and it goes away. I looked at the clouds and I thought you, too, darken and change and distort the beauty of the sky! How changeable, how transient was everything! But as I stood there looking into the sky, these words came to my mind, such simple but strange words, as though someone was speaking to me: *Only the spirit is of value.*

What did those words mean? They were vague. Suppose some day my spirit should be beautiful, it could not help me now and it was the now that meant life to me; nothing else mattered! I turned sadly away from the window with the words in my ear: *Only the spirit is of value.*

And then I thought of those young men who had given their lives in the war so that we

might be comfortable and safe; those beautiful young men who were blinded, distorted; those who tried to see the sunshine and could only see the darkness; those who wanted to smile and could only grin hideously; those faces once handsome, now twisted, expressionless, ugly, left to live with a pain always in their hearts—still to live on! They were young and eager for life, too, and I thought, “They endure it and so can I. My life is like theirs and my life *should* be with theirs!” I would spend my days in caring for them. What matter if I was no longer pleasant to look upon? What matter if I dropped out of the world? What matter if no one loved me again?—for I had lived, I had known the realization of love! I had known *June and Sharon*! I had lived my life in a few precious days. Should I not give up now without feeling that I had been cheated by fate? But what I should do was indeed a problem. For this last catastrophe would handicap me badly. In my work, in singing, personality counted for so much; it does in every struggle for existence. Say what we will, personal charm counts for much in every line of work.

Appearance means more than we realize. Ugliness is always offensive. It is grotesque!

Were those simple words carrying a great meaning in my soul?—

Only the spirit is of value?

Did everything adjust itself in time? Was the earth life only a minute in eternity? Was *character* the greatest factor in existence? If I maintained beauty in my heart would everything become transformed? Was it true that in the Heaven World we are to be beautiful in the degree that our thoughts are beautiful? And on this earth is there something more important and more illuminating than personal success and romantic love? And is that something *service*? Was it then a privilege to suffer so as to learn the great secret of life, that of helping others? Was this *really* true?

Wasn't it all going to end beautifully some time, somehow, somewhere? I felt calm and serene, but yet there was that slow, cruel realization in my mind that I could never see my own soul again! I could never

look into the glass and see myself, for the scar had brought an alien expression, a new personality; when I looked it was not I, *and then I was afraid!*

I was living between a strange serenity, a sort of rebirth, and a childlike sadness. These two emotions fought with one another until I did not know which one had triumphed, for I was too tired to think; I only longed for a garden where I had seen my soul, the great tree, the white gate and a little child.

After a while I fell asleep and dreamed. I saw myself walking in the beautiful garden again. I was tall, young and happy, my hair was a magnificent shade of gold and I was dressed in a strange blue gown. It was the shade of the violet ray. My arms were encircled by clouds of rosy tulle. Whenever I thought of anything beautiful, the waves in my hair seemed to pulsate with a strange energy; the blue of my gown deepened into a shade too exquisite to understand and the pink on my arms suddenly changed into a substance like snow in which white roses were buried.

There was a perfume from the colors as well as from the roses and the flowers seemed to smile! In front was a large tree whose branches said things that were intelligible to me. Then a vision came to me. It was this . . .

THE WHITE GATE

I WALKED on and suddenly I found myself at the White Gate.

It was very simple and very small, merely leading to a white chapel where music could be heard, strange chants in a minor key. An odor of incense came to me and I heard a few solemn prayers. The sun seemed to caress the blue glass of the windows and, as I walked closer, I listened so that I might know what kind of service it was. It was not a Catholic chapel, it was of some unusual order. But it was all so mystic I could not see clearly. A flame burned brightly in some swinging vase and the chapel seemed to bury itself in the great clouds that changed into white as they moved, encircling the sapphire blue of the Cross which went straight and solemnly

up toward the sky. There were white roses everywhere. They started at the gate and ran along the cross and grew by the silent door. This was a symbol to me and I thought of something deeper than the conception of purity.

"Tell me," I said to the early morning (the young day holds messages freshly given by the contact with the dawn). "Tell me," I said, "what is it? What is the meaning in the whiteness of this place?" "When you know that you may pass through the white gate," my soul seemed to answer. "The roses will bloom for you, the door will open and you will go within."

"I am dreaming, dreaming," I thought. "I can never enter here."

Each day I have come and each day I have gone back; sometimes I have come in the dusk with only the shadows to guide me. Sometimes I have come at dawn and again with the evening star; but always I have gone away with an ache in my heart, for I could never open the gate; it was too firmly tied by the roses. . . .

One day I went at noon. I was weary. I

had walked a long way and I was so far from home. I threw myself down upon the grass, looked longingly at this place I loved. As I did I saw a little child walking down the road. She was crying bitterly. She was lost.

"Take me to my home," she said. "I have lost my way."

"Which way?" I said. "Which way shall we go?"

"That way," she said, pointing down the road I had so recently passed over in my long pilgrimage.

"I live at the end of the road," she said. "It is very far away, and when the night comes on I will be afraid."

"I will take you," I said mechanically, walking slowly at her side on the dusty path in the sun toward the end of the road.

"I am so tired you must carry me now," she said.

Wearily I took her in my arms and walked on. It seemed endless, I was thirsty and weary. The child finally slept heavily in my arms, pulling on my neck with leaden hands. Is she dead, I thought, she is so heavy now

and she breathes so quietly! *All that day I walked on. . . .*

At dusk she awakened suddenly and looked about. "This is not the way," she said. "I have made a mistake. It is the other way. I want the White Gate," she murmured between her sobs.

"We have passed it long ago," I said, reproachfully. "Didn't you see it when you asked me to take you home?"

"I was too frightened," she answered. "I did not see anything. Let us go back. Can you find the way?"

"Yes, I can find the way," I said. "But I am very tired myself."

How stupid of the child, I thought.

"Why did you say the end of the road? How *could* you make such a mistake?

"That's what my mother calls it," she murmured timidly, her small hands quivering with fear. "And she knows everything."

"Yes," I said doubtfully and slowly retraced my steps.

"How dark it is," she said. "The noises are so strange! I am afraid of the night, perhaps you will stumble and fall."

"Hush, child, be quiet," I said. "I will take you home."

All that night I walked. There was no star, no breeze, and the dust was so heavy at my feet and the way long—so hard and so far! The wind moaned through the trees. There were no larks, no morning songs, no pleasant reminders of the coming day; only stillness—nothingness—and the black night.

At dawn we reached the White Gate.

"I smell the roses," said the child. "We are near it now, I know."

"Can you hear the music?" she asked.

"I can hear nothing, I am too tired," I murmured wearily.

As I looked I saw the sun coming up directly over the White Chapel. The rays caused the dew to sparkle and the clouds had formed a halo around the cross where the outline of a figure appeared. It was someone I had never seen before and as I looked down I saw that the roses had bloomed so fully that the thorns had all fallen away, and I saw that the child had begun to smile. Taking my hand, she kissed it and said:

"You may go in, now."

Softly she opened the White Gate. It swung ajar and I looked down in reverence, in humility. As I did, I saw the door; it was open and as I walked closer I saw a word written with flower petals and fresh leaves and I heard a great chord from the organ echo in the still air. The sun had lost its redness and changed into gold, while the child's smile grew sweeter, and as I looked again at the word written upon the door I saw that it was the word *Peace*. And I thought: "Why are people so disdainful of earth, so eager to look into the clouds for loveliness, often treading upon beautiful things, to follow a golden cloud only to see it disappear in the distance? To gaze at a star, only to see it sink down to earth or to watch the moon, until maddened by its fullness, when they might possess a *Rose* . . . ?"

REALIZATION

“WE ARE clowns whose hearts are broken.”

Many people sincerely believe that they know sorrow because they know death. They believe that they know suffering because they know love and because they have lost it. They believe that they know life because they study it, art because they have seen it, music because they have heard it. But still they do not know, for to have known death is to have known God, to have known love and to have lost it is to have known ecstasy and contrast. To have known death, love and music is still not to have known all, for humiliation is the supreme agony and it is the supreme test, and to endure humiliation is the hardest thing in the world. It means that everything is reversed, it means that one must create an en-

tirely new perspective and an entirely new mode of living, so as finally to make humiliation a magnificent thing instead of allowing it to remain grotesque.

The desire was to run away and hide. It was not mere vanity alone (of course there was much of it), but there were other things, love of the fitness in things, and pride.

One of the many things which sorrow taught me is that the power of thought is a potent thing. Do you know that when I selected unfashionable streets to walk upon with the hope that I would not see the people I knew, I invariably ran into just those people whom I wished to elude? Do you see that it was the things I feared that came upon me?

Also I learned another thing. To say to myself when I was unhappy, when I was tempted to indulge in self pity: "What does it matter, these people? Are they worth worrying about?"

Not until I quite gradually developed a new perspective did I realize that while going through such a phase one learns something, whereas when things are conventionally ar-

ranged the mind is not so analytical. At first I had imagined myself quite singled out for this kind of suffering, that it had been especially designed for me, but on those unfashionable streets I found myself dropping into unfashionable churches for shelter, as well as for praise, where I found so many others. Finally I began to know them—these people who seemed to have lost everything and who really had gained so much. I never spoke to them. I wanted to. It was because I had no money to give them and this was the hardest thing to bear, to see suffering, to know its reality, to be near it, to touch it—and still to remain silent. In former days I had known the joy of giving, of seeing a strange and beautiful smile come into the faces of the poor, those who had been promised much and given little.

One day I was sitting in a church. I seemed to be the only person there—it was the noon hour. I sighed and looked about and thought, “At least I am alone now. Suddenly a child passed me and went slowly up to the altar. The sun came through the window and fell upon her hair. It was very golden and

beautiful. Solemnly she made her little prayer and walked again down the aisle. As she came nearer to me I saw a tear fall from her eye.

Now what is more terrible than the tears of a little child, what more beautiful than its trying to reach God? As she came toward me I reached out my hand. "What is it?" I said. "What is it?"

"Oh! nothing," she answered, listlessly twisting her little hands. "My mother is ill and my father has gone away. I cannot find him anywhere and the babies are so cross I cant keep them quiet any more and the noise is bad for my mother."

"Is your mother all alone? Do you need anything?" I blurted out hurriedly.

"Well, you see, my mother worked until the two babies came and now she cannot go out any more and I'm all she has that's big and the doctor does not come so often now and whenever I buy her milk she gives it to the babies. I just don't know what to do!"

"Do you think that the candle will bring us good luck?" she asked, as she turned and looked longingly up the aisle.

"I will help you," I said with assurance.

Her face brightened keenly, but when I said, "Come back here at four o'clock," her smile went away and she said innocently:

"A lady told me that yesterday, but she never came back and I waited here all day."

"But I will come back," I said. "Don't worry, dear, I won't forget to come back."

She looked at me doubtfully and walked slowly away, and I sat there motionless.

Now I had sold all the jewelry I had, even my vanity box, and there was absolutely no way to get the money for that child by four o'clock and yet I had to do it, I had promised!

I sat there for an hour agitated, thinking, praying for help. Finally I went home. I came up here and I thought and thought. I looked around the room. I came in and thought and thought again. I looked around the room at my clothes, at everything I had, but there was nothing more to sell!

"What shall I do, what shall I do?" I thought. There was nothing left. I went out and knocked at the door of my neighbor, but

she too was gone. As I re-entered my door I caught sight of some evening slippers of various kinds and colors lying under the bed. "The buckles," I said aloud to myself—"the buckles! I will sell them; they will bring something." Grabbing the slippers, I ripped off the buckles, tied them up and started for a small pawnshop a few blocks away. I entered by a side door. A terrible-looking man appeared and fairly shouted at me:

"How much do you want for those things? Hurry up and say what you want for them!"

"Why, I don't know," I said. "I want you to tell me."

"Me? My God!" he said, "do you think I have the time to price that junk? Hurry up and say how much you want for them—it's the rule here. How much?" he repeated impatiently.

"Fifty dollars," I said calmly.

"You mean fifteen dollars," he shouted. "Don't you?"

"I paid forty dollars a pair for them; they are cut steel. There are three pairs and I have not used them very much."

"I'll see," he muttered, and walked toward the office, where another man said mechanically:

"Ten dollars for the whole lot; not another cent."

My heart sank, for I knew by his tone that it was final. Taking the musty bill the man handed me, I walked out into the street. He called to me:

"Madam, your ticket! Take your ticket!"

I never turned around, I walked mechanically into the street. Ten dollars, I thought, but it would at least buy food and I wanted so to take them some clothes!

I walked back to the church listlessly. In a few minutes the child appeared.

"Let us go and buy some things together," I said; "you might lose the bill."

"Yes," answered the child eagerly, "and let's buy some milk first, the babies are so cross again."

We went to a grocery shop where they seemed to keep everything and then to the child's home. It was on Third Avenue. We entered a dark building and climbed up four flights of narrow stairs.

I said to the child, as though thinking aloud: "Aren't you afraid of falling, aren't you afraid of these stairs?"

"Oh! no," she answered. "I never fall, I never think about it."

"Perhaps that's why you don't fall," I thought as she led the way toward the mother's room.

As I entered a horrible odor seemed to rush out of the room.

It was stale, heavy, malignant and the babies were crying. As I glanced up at the bleak wall I saw something that I shall never forget. It was badly framed, badly colored and decorated. It was one of those expressions of faith that one sees hanging in such simple homes. Only this one meant something, as a rule they have such things as "Greeting," "Welcome Home." But this had something written on it that I shall never forget. It was this:

"Those who dwell in the shadow of the Almighty shall fear no evil."

Beneath this was a table, covered with oil-cloth and above it was a crucifix and a candle which burned slowly.

"Don't cry, my darlings." said a kind voice. "Mother will have the milk soon. Look out of the window at the sun and see the angels in the sky!"

How strange, I thought. Poor thing, she is delirious. Mothers don't talk about angels to their babies. Going toward the bed, I saw what I thought to be another child, a young and beautiful face, so I said to my little companion:

"Where is your mother, dear?"

"That's mother," she said, pointing to the bed. "She's our mother."

"Oh!" I said. "It cannot be." But grasping the situation, I said:

"I have come to see you, to bring you some things—would you like something now?"

Looking straight at me, she answered me in a strange way.

"Of course, it's true," she said. "Whenever I see figures in the sky, it means that something good is going to happen. I really see them, madam," she said. "Sometimes when the sun is very bright——."

"Of course," I said. "Of course, you do," and gave her the milk. Taking it from my

hand gently, she handed it to the baby on her right. After serving the mother I helped the little girl untie the packages and insisted upon her eating a sensible meal. This she did reluctantly and every once in a while she would say: "Don't make me eat any more, we must save it for to-morrow."

To-morrow I thought—*to-morrow!* And I cannot come back to-morrow! there will be nothing to bring them. I——.

Well, my friend, I went away with a promise to come back soon, for you see I am making what once seemed to me a supreme sacrifice, so that I may be able to say to that child; "Don't worry dear, I shall come back, to-morrow. Now don't you see why I am not only willing but glad and don't you see that I shall be *happy?*——"

THE MAGNIFICENT MISTAKE

I SAT down and wrote Douglas just what had happened. I told him everything. After I had mailed the letter I was frightened because I was afraid that I would lose him, too. I knew that he loved me. I had already told him that I didn't love him; but I hadn't told him about——

He wrote me kindly and said that he never wanted to see me again. This of course was a compliment to me, for if his love had been light and merely physical, he would have come back to me immediately; but there had been something sacred in his love, something dignified and fine.

Weeks went on, I heard nothing from him. Again I was hopeless and completely shocked. I realized then that I had lost everything that I loved. Weeks of agony dragged slowly by;

my health began to fail and I thought that the philosophy of designing, ordinary women was perhaps wiser than mine; those who say that it is always stupid to tell a man one's *past* and indeed it seems so; but somehow I just had to tell him the truth!

One morning when I was too listless, too really indisposed to care any more, to make new friends or to think, I was making my coffee, trying to take something that would stimulate me enough to live another day, when a letter was shoved through my door. It was such a small letter I went on drinking my coffee. It would only hurt me, I thought, I won't read it.

Tearing it open carelessly, I tore into a slip of green paper. It was a check. My head was dizzy for a minute. I could not quite make it out. Then I suddenly realized that it was large enough to cover all of my expenses for weeks to come. Faintly written in pencil on the back of the check were these words:

To help you because you told me
the truth. I wish it could be larger.

THE MAJNIFICENT MISTAKE 113

Erase these words, sign your name
and begin life again.

Underneath this was the word "Kismet" which had always been our way of saying good-bye! I had made a mistake in telling him. I had lost him, it seemed, forever!

In a few days Douglas suddenly came without warning. There was nothing indirect in him. He walked slowly into my room and said; "I could not stay away, Cynthia, I want you to marry me. I love you."

"But look at me," I said—"Look at me—I'm changed, look at my eye."

He said nothing at first, only kissed me. "You are *always* beautiful to *me*," he murmured.

Douglas, with his great noble smile tinged by something that not only beautified but embraced, had a something from the soul, a something which makes the poets love expression more than color and line. How different he was from the other men. His soul came from the essence of things, from

the infinite consciousness; it is seldom seen in this modern world of ours, for modern civilization is materialistic. It has not even the strength of actual wickedness.

His smile, how compelling it was; how full of hope and gentleness, penetrating the very fibre, the depths of my being. I noticed again the immutable law of correspondence; where there is a beautiful smile, there is always a beautiful voice and a beautiful hand. His hands were those of an artist; his fingers seemed always to be talking and yet they never moved; the expression was so perfect, so potent that they were irresistible.

When he was away I missed his smile, but when he stayed away, it was unbearable; it was as though the sun had gone down and as though the angels had turned their faces away. Mentally, I had pictured these angels grouped together standing on a hillside. I called to them, I ran toward them, I fell down upon the sweet earth and begged them to look at me, but their faces were turned away. Half furiously, half meekly with a terrible energy, I ran nearer to them, but when I reached them they were gone, they eluded me

and went somehow into the sky, that part which seems to touch the trees and then caress the sea. When I reached the gold and blue of the radiant clouds, I looked about and waited and everything suddenly became black and there was no star. *They had gone and their faces were turned away! And now he had come back to me——.*

How wonderful it was——

THE EVERLASTING ARMS

“AVE MARIA—AVE MARIA,” I cried in my heart, “help me, teach me the beauty of service.”

This I said as I walked toward the altar in a bewildered state and as I stood there, not hearing what the priest said but thinking these words, the sun suddenly burst through the windows, through the crimson and purple glass and the light fell at my feet. The flowers trembled a little and the priest let the holy water fall upon them and then upon me, and as it did I knew that my initiation had begun, and strangely enough not with fear, with keen memories of the past and fear for the future, but with tranquil strength, grace and a song!

All of my life I had dreaded this moment,

the moment of union without love and now I was standing by a friend and not a lover. But how beautiful friendship had become! Just then the organ played Ave Maria again and instead of thinking of our Heavenly Mother who might send me blessings I thought of a young mother, in a poverty stricken street, a musty room, the little children and "the figures in the sky!"

I walked quietly out of the little church. There were few people, but I noticed that their heads were bowed. I wondered if they guessed the struggle in my heart and were afraid to look at my face, afraid of the sorrow, its renunciation, its terrible calmness!

As I walked away, an old lady dressed in the Martha Washington style, with her strange bonnet tied with purple ribbons, her face illumined, her hair very white and her voice very tender, said: "I told you, child, that the sign of Aries is sacrifice. How beautiful it is, and you," she added graciously.

"Thank you," I said. "I am not beautiful, but my husband is. *Did you notice his smile?*"

Many weeks passed; there was our magnificent home, its regal splendor, the many friends and our work. And the beauty as well as the mystery of it is that one never feels tired or sad or reminiscent in this work for others. The present is too acute, too poignant, too urgent to think of one's self, and one very important point in this, my friend, that no one knows it until they live this life of service. If it had not been *thrust* upon me by environment I would never have known it, for I always looked for my own happiness, for love and its realization! I suppose most of us develop in this way, *not* through lofty desire but through disappointment and sorrow.

In the morning, before the glory of the day burst upon me, there was a feeling of awe, of recognition—a strange chord stamped itself into my heart, a chord of assurance, with its white notes of God, pregnant with significance and then came the purple and gold, the fine lace, the lilies and a voice, a wave, a sudden current descending upon me bringing the words of Newcomb, clearly and concretely: “And above are the Everlasting Arms.”

Simple but great words, full of suggestion, of symbolism. I walked closer to the window and as I did, I looked out and saw the sun coming slowly, steadily over the trees and the chord that I heard, I heard again. At first it was triumphant and then it was tender, it had meaning, that fine thing which surrounds the coronation of those whose lives are spent for others. I listened again but I heard nothing. I could only feel, and then in the midst of this vision, I quite humanly began to think of myself again and I dreamed of going to the East. I could work there, too, and somehow it was my home! All of my life I had longed for Egypt, India, Persia and wise Chaldea!

“Dearest,” I said as I touched the arm of my husband, “let us make our home elsewhere—take me away—*very far away*——”

“I understand,” he said.

“You always do,” I said.

“Let me tell you how I feel about it,” I continued, in my own simple way. “I want to go home to the East, where pilgrims kneel. I want to go back to the East, where souls can sing, where no one laughs at praise,

where love is known, comprehended, understood. Where the sun is a symbol, the moon a messenger. Where all nature chants in one song of solid beauty its prayer to the invisible. Where the etheric is as potent as the real. Where subtlety is known, where the obvious is driven out. Where high mountains beckon and call. Where the night is a revelation and the day a benediction. *I want to go home to the East.*

“It is as you wish, always,” he said; “I, too, shall be glad to go.”

As we turned from the window I heard again that voice. It was a sort of whisper, a voice and not a voice; it said: “And above are the Everlasting Arms.”

And this is what she told me.

THE END

